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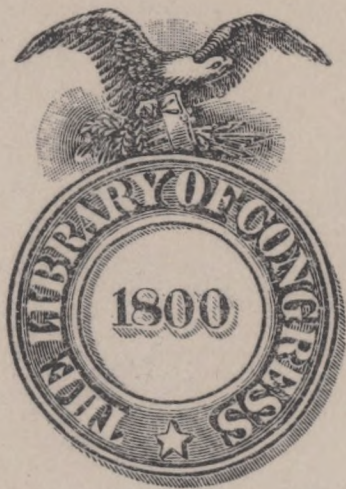
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no. 1

Handicapped.

BY H. M. BURR.

PART I

The Metropolitan Opera House was emptying itself upon the midnight street. The crowd pouring out of the entrance rapidly divided into streams and brooks and rivulets of people. Some walked hurriedly away, anxious to save a nickel, to make up in their minds at least for an unusual extravagance; others struggled for the street cars, desirous of getting as much rest as possible before the morrow's work; others leisurely waited for their carriages and automobiles to be called off, some of them conscious that they were the envy of many a walker and car rider, and that their equipages were the substantial evidences of their having arrived at a certain coveted stage in the race for wealth and place.

Drifting out with the streams of carriage aristocracy come a man and woman, who to the discriminating eye are worth a second glance. The man, somewhat above the average height, broad-browed, keen-eyed, clean-cut in face and figure, was obviously a thorobred—one who wins with flying colors or drops in the harness. A subtle air of success about him showed that hitherto he had been a winner in most of life's races. Every movement showed the easy poise of a man long familiar with the refinements and luxuries of life, and at the same time there were lines in the face and a set of the jaw which suggested that wealth and social position had been won and

not inherited, and that in the most strenuous battlefield in the world.

Tho he was unmistakably a young man, the silvered temples showed that his years had been long in intensity. His eyes tho quiet and steady had that look which always indicates that the human engine is being run at high pressure.

The young woman who walked by his side as he led the way to their carriage was of a type clearly ordained by nature to be the mate of such a man, tho she evidently was not such as yet. The critical observer would have noticed an indefinable harmony which seemed to include every detail of expression, dress and bearing—a harmony so perfect as to deceive the careless observer into thinking that she was almost commonplace. She had those characteristics of face and figure which are only remarkable in combination and are the despair of the novelist and the artist. To say that she was of medium height, with brown hair and hazel eyes, that her dress was the work of a New York tailor, that her bearing was quiet and dignified, with something that suggested both character and capacity, would be to give a description which would apply to a large number of fine American girls. Yet to those who loved her, Margaret Maybourne was anything but commonplace. Beneath the surface of good breeding and general fine feeling there lay mines of undeveloped wealth that only waited for the man and the occasion.

As the cab hurried them along to Margaret's home, the two talked together with the freedom of old acquaintances, and yet with certain restraint which suggested that

an old friendship was ready to blossom into a deeper and more intimate relation. But both recognized the fact that to hurry the process would be to rob the flower of their courtship of something of its beauty and fragrance. And yet as Rodney Levasseur watched the tender glow in the eyes of the girl, it seemed to him that the time of waiting must end. Why should he wait longer? True, Margaret was the only daughter of a railroad magnate, David Maybourne, heiress to no one knew how many stocks and bonds, sought after by many men of wealth and station, but he had no false modesty and knew that his blood was as good as theirs, his manners as polished, and over against their wealth he could place an unusual measure of success in his chosen profession, for altho still a young man, he was recognized as one of the best surgeons in the great metropolis. David Maybourne had already decided that the rising young surgeon was most to his liking of Margaret's suitors. And Margaret? While Rodney was not sure, he could not but hope. Why wait longer? His heart cried out for expression. It even seemed as tho her attitude was one of tremulous expectation, but still his lips refused to voice the cry of his heart. It was as tho some iron hand held back every word of love at mouth gate, as quaint old John Bunyan would have said. Margaret, with a loving woman's swift intuition, sensed the strange conflict and constraint and glanced anxiously at him. She could not easily meet the hungry appeal of his eyes. His lips talked on with mechanical ease of purely impersonal matters, but his face gave evidence of the inner conflict. There were lines in it which she had never seen before and it seemed strangely white

in the pale electric light. She had an anxious question on her lips, when the cab rattled up to the curb before her home.

Rodney helped her to alight and escorted her up the granite steps. It was too late to ask him in, but again she turned to question him, only to be checked by something in his manner which made it impossible. The good-night greeting was pleasantly formal, but the fire in his eyes burned even more brightly. It seemed to Margaret as if he could not go without speaking, but he did. She turned as she closed the street door, looking thru the plate glass panels to see him depart, perhaps hoping, who knows, for a last message that the eyes could speak if the lips would not.

To her surprise he had not yet reached his carriage, he who was usually so quick and light of foot. He was walking slowly down the steps with his hand on the brass railing, like an old man who has learned not to trust his legs without other support. When he reached the sidewalk he crossed to his carriage steadily but with strangely lingering footsteps. A sudden terror gripped her and she cried out, "Rodney! Rodney!" forgetting the heavy closed door. Tho he did not hear her cry, some appeal from her soul to his reached him. He turned and looked at her, his white face framed in the window of the cab, and his eyes?—did she see by love's clairvoyance their strange look of love and longing, mingled with pain, or was it her imagination?

Margaret went to her room with hesitating footsteps, saying to herself, "He loves me; his eyes told me that," and then with a dull pain, "Why did he not speak? And

if he were ill, why did he not tell me—if he loved me?”

A few moments later the doctor's cab drew up before a handsome apartment house, where under a window was the polished brass announcement of his profession,

RODNEY LEVASSEUR

PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON

yano, opened the door for him and followed him to his inner office, for no matter how late Rodney was out, Koyano was always waiting for him. As always, he

He stepped out of his cab and walked up the steps and to his rooms with the same dull deliberateness with which he had left Margaret's house. His Japanese man, Koyano, found his easy chair drawn up by the light, his smoking jacket thrown over its back, his favorite cigars and the latest magazines within reach. Everything was in its usual place, but tonight he seemed to see it all as in a dream. Without changing his coat he sank into the chair, forgetting even to remove his hat till the little brown man, hovering about him, reminded him of it.

Finally he seemed to rouse himself as if from a trance and turning to Koyano, said: “Bring me that large book from the bottom shelf, the third from the end; breakfast at nine; cut out the telephone—I will answer no calls tonight.”

After Koyano had gone he turned to the book—“Disorders of the Nervous System,” Colrain. He turned over the pages till he found a chapter headed “Paresis,” and then to a paragraph with “Cerebro Spinal” in stout black

letters in its beginning. He had often seen them before, but tonight they looked as black as the wolves of Cerberus. Slowly he read, following the lead of his finger as he had done when a child. He read it thru till the last word and then the pilot finger stopped . . . and a darkness—a darkness that could be felt settled down upon his spirit. The relentless clock counted off the passing hours and moments, but the finger still rested on the page of the ponderous leather-covered book. Were it not for the eyes one might have thought him dead—he was so still and motionless. These seemed turned to look within, witnessing some Waterloo of the spirit. Thus the gray morning light found him as it struggled thru the smoky haze of the metropolis.

It roused him from his long conflict. He slowly shut the book and laid it upon the table and then bent forward as if to rise, but his limbs refused his bidding and he sank back into his chair with a groan. He was paralyzed. The brain could not as yet forget its habit of command and he tried again to rise, but in vain.

Tho Rodney had been brought up in a Christian home and was a member of the old home church, religious observances had been dropped one by one out of his life. First, the Bible had been shelved, then church-going had been crowded out, and last of all, the habit of prayer and any conscious recognition of God. If he had been asked what his religion was, he probably would have answered, "To do my work as well as I can." But now at this supreme crisis of his life, going back to the habit of his boyhood, he cried out, "God! God! God!", like a child in the dark crying for his mother.

I like to think that it was in answer to this cry of a despairing soul that the man's spirit roused itself to a struggle for self-mastery. The look of agonized terror left his face by degrees and was replaced by a look such as one sometimes sees on the faces of the mortally wounded, who still can fire another round or make a final charge.

When Koyano came in with his breakfast he found the doctor sitting in the chair as he had left him and his eyes, made keen by affection for "his doctor," read almost in a glance that something was wrong, tho his Oriental calm did not leave him, and he only said, "Ah—it is bad, the doctor is sick." "Yes," said Rodney, in a far-off voice very unlike his own, "I am knocked out"—and as if the words were dragged from him, "Can't move my legs. Telephone Dr. Colrain and ask him to call on Dr. Levasseur at his earliest convenience."

No mother could have been more tender and deft than was Koyano as he ministered to the helpless man, "with the tenderness of a woman and the strength of a man," as Rodney said of him long afterwards.

Dr. Colrain, the famous specialist in nerve diseases, came with a swiftness that told much of his affection for his pupil and friend. His hair was snow white, and his face furrowed with lines of thot and effort, but the dome-like forehead was as smooth as marble, and his skin had the warm glow which comes from strongly pulsing blood and the vitality which the great workers of the world have. He entered Rodney's office with a genial greeting, "Well, my boy, what's up?" But a glance showed him that this was no commonplace indisposition,

and the friend was merged at once into the physician and man of science. In a quiet and almost cold-blooded way, as it might have seemed to an outsider, he went over the case point by point, once, twice, thrice. Then he walked to the window and stood looking silently out. As Rodney watched him, he saw the hand that played with the curtain tremble a little and then grip the cord till the tendons on the back of his hand showed white. For a moment Rodney forgot himself in the pain of his friend. He knew that the old doctor was fond of him, but he had not imagined that he would care like this.

At last Dr. Colrain turned from the window and said abruptly, as is the manner of men under the stress of great feeling, "Rod, I wish it had been the old dog and not the young—I will be in again," and hurried away. There was no need of formal diagnosis.

After his friend had gone, Rodney read sentence upon himself as if he had been the physician instead of the patient. "Cerebro-spinal paresis—caused by prolonged nervous strain. Cure? None! Treatment? Immaterial! Length of life? May live to a good old age—tho unlikely." He laughed aloud with a hoarse laugh that would have been more heartbreaking than sobs to one who loved him.

To his surprise the voiceless anguish of the night gradually passed. He felt as if in a kind of stupor and seemed to think of himself no longer in the first person, but his mind worked with unusual clearness and he began to plan for the future. With the instinct which men often share with sick and wounded animals, he longed to crawl away and hide from all those whom he had known

in the days of his strength. And Margaret? At the thought of her a red wave of agony submerged him, but it was only for a moment, and then his thoughts went on in the same impersonal way. To slip away and hide; to be forgotten; that was the thing, but how, where, when? As he sat brooding with closed eyes there suddenly rose before him the picture of a camp in the woods in Northwestern Canada, where he had spent many a summer vacation. He was on the rough porch of his log cabin; beneath him lay the river. In the stillness he could hear the rush of its waters. To the east lay the blue lake, glistening in the glow of the setting sun, reflected from the wings of cloud birds which hovered over it. To the west the forest of fern and pine stretched away for leagues till it lost itself in the slopes of the Rockies, whose snowcaps were now studded with gems and sheathed in gold like a bishop's mitre. The breath of the fern and the balsam seemed to fill his nostrils; the thousand voices of the forest seemed to call to him, "Come! Come! Come!"

He opened his eyes with a start. Yes, he would go at once, as swiftly as the twin magicians, steam and steel, would bear him. All the energy of his nature seemed to concentrate in the passion to get away. The crippled body seemed to have centered all its vigor in the brain. He called Koyano and gave directions for packing, for purchase of tickets and for a hundred and one details of preparation which would have hopelessly befuddled the ordinary valet, but Koyano had the genius for management illustrated so wonderfully in the Russo-Japanese War. He went about his task with the skill of a com-

missary-general. From New York to the far-off wilderness everything would happen as "prearranged."

After Koyano had gone out, Rodney drew his writing materials toward him and wrote three letters. The first was directed, Mr. James Joy, Camp Aloha, ———, Canada, and read as follows:

NEW YORK, JUNE —

DEAR JIM:

I have been caught. Coming back to you and the trees. Reach camp by boat July 3.

As ever your friend,

"Doc."

The second letter was to a doctor who had been a classmate in a medical school, a fine fellow who had brains and ability, but had somehow or other not "struck it rich" as yet, located in a poor office with an uncertain practice on the lower West Side.

RICHARD COMEYN, M. D.

MY DEAR DICK:

Knocked up and must take a long rest. Am answering "the call of the wild." Want a good man to take my office and practice for an indefinite period. The rent is paid for a year in advance. I am sure you will do it for old times' sake. I leave a list of patients who are on the free list. You will look out for them I am sure.

Good luck, old man,

ROD.

The third letter was directed to Miss Margaret Maybourne and read as follows:

MY DEAR MARGARET:

Last night I had it in my heart to ask you a question, but something shut the doors of my lips. Perhaps it was Providence,

or God, or some approaching intuition of disaster. If I, and if you—but I must not think of that, how terrible it would have been! But I am man enough to be thankful that I did not speak, that is, if you really cared. If I were more of a man, I would pray that you had not learned to care.

Now I am like a dead man, writing from the other side.

May God give you all the things that I once hoped I might give you while I was a man among men.

I have gone—do not ask where—to be forgotten, and looking for forgetfulness, tho even now something tells me I shall not find it.

But the letter was not mailed. Instead he tore it into a hundred fragments which he tossed into the waste basket, not noticing that Koyano, who had returned, had been watching him intently with those inscrutable Oriental eyes.

Again he wrote, this time swiftly and nervously, not once stopping, as if he feared that his resolution would fail him if he paused for an instant.

MY DEAR MISS MAYBOURNE:

I have been called away from the city on important business. I shall be gone for an indefinite period. I shall miss many things, but none more than being one of your train of admiring friends. Dr. Comeyn will occupy my office.

May you be as happy as you deserve to be.

Your friend,

RODNEY LEVASSEUR.

PART II.

A group of lumbermen, trappers, prospectors and guides were loafing about the combined store and post-office of a frontier village in the wilds of Canada. No railroad had as yet attacked the region. Twice a week during the open season, a wheezy old steamer made the trip up the lake and to the headwaters of navigation on the river. It was Wednesday night and the mail had just come in. Few of the men that lingered while it was being sorted had any justifiable expectation of getting letters, but there was still an air of expectancy as they heard the names of the fortunate ones called off, as was the custom of the place.

At the back of the group stood a tall man with the rawhide leanness of the frontier, whose face was as grave as that of a New England deacon, but in whose deep-set eyes there twinkled an unquenchable spirit of humor. His tongue was evidently "hung in the middle," for there flowed from his lips an unbroken stream of talk, mingling satire and horseplay with quaint bits of rustic philosophy. He was clearly the town wag and also the town philosopher upon whom the simple men of the camp and woods depended for amusement, and without knowing it, for homespun wisdom and morality.

Tonight, as usual, he was holding forth, subjecting each man who went to the little window for his mail to a running fire of comment: "Step right along, Bill. She ain't goin' to write agin 'ntil you do. It's only a circiler

for hair restorer." But by this time Bill had drawn back, shamefacedly rubbing his bald pate. "Move up, Sam, and git yer monthly dividend from the Pole Cat Mine." Sam turned an honest penny by trapping the cat with the short legs and long smell. So it went on till the voice of the postman called out with an air of evident surprise, "Jim Joy, letter," adjusting his spectacles, "from New York." The tide of caustic comment from the back row suddenly ceased and the astonished orator lurched up to the little window, dumb for once in his life, for Jim had not had a letter since the last summer that "Doc" had come to camp. Everyone waited in eager suspense, feeling that a letter for Jim was a town matter.

As Jim opened the letter with clumsy fingers, his watchers saw that they trembled, and were startled, for they knew that if that same hand were holding a rifle upon a grizzly or a paddle in the most dangerous of rapids, it would have been "as steady as a church."

Jim read his letter slowly and with great difficulty, tho the writing was as plain as typewriting, and then repeated, half under his breath, but in a tone easily heard by every eager listener, "'Doc' has been ketched, 'Doc' has been ketched," and then dashing the letter at his feet shouted in a voice that he only used in some crisis of a great log jam, "Hell! boys, the doctor has been ketched."

To these men of the woods it could only mean one thing. If, when cutting trees in the woods, a man was caught beneath a trunk or branch by some mischance, and his back or leg broken, the men simply said, "He was ketched." It always meant one man less in camp,

and often a rude pine box made from rough unplanned boards and a prayer by the *curé*, and then a white wooden cross. That a "pill mixer," as they had playfully called the doctor, should be "ketched" in a great city was no cause for question. To these men the whole world was filled with trees, trees, trees, from the sunrise to the sunset, with now and then a patch of water or prairie or clearing.

No one spoke for a little. The doctor had been a great favorite among the men. Many an old wound or mysterious ailment had yielded to his subtle magic. To them all, as to the Indian, Walking Horse, he was "heap big medicine." But a sudden change passed over Jim's face and the surprised pain and dismay gave way to a tender look of solicitude that his fellows had never seen before, and he stooped down and picked up the letter and read it again. "Boys," said he in a voice which trembled a little, "he is coming back to the woods by the next boat. How many of you fellers will help put his cabin to rights tomorrer?" He did not wait for an answer, knowing that there would be more men at the cabin the next day than he could use, but pulling his hat over his eyes he walked out into the night, to mourn over his friend and at the same time with a glow at his heart because "Doc" was coming back to him.

The next day a score of men made the camp shipshape with affectionate zeal, doing a hundred things which no one would have thought necessary for himself. New slabs were put on uncertain places in the roof and stones replaced in the chimney. Fresh balsam boughs were cut and so laid that they would make a couch soft

enough for a king, and redolent with the most wholesome fragrance in the world. A new wooden hinge was made for the door. The spring behind the cabin which bubbled up thru the hollow trunk of an ancient tree was cleaned. A small boy even remembered to catch a trout from a nearby brook and put it in the spring because he remembered that the doctor liked to have one there. At last a broader path with an easier ascent was made from the lumber camp to the cabin.

On Saturday afternoon when the boat was due all the men who could get away were at the rude log dock watching for her coming. By common consent, Jim Joy was given the post of honor, a great pile that gave the watcher some ten feet of advantage. By and by a hoarse whistle was heard and a trail of smoke could be seen above the trees that hid a bend in the river. Then the churn of her paddle wheels could be heard by the eager listeners, and at last the boat herself appeared around the bend and drew near the dock. As Jim from his point of vantage looked down upon the deck of the approaching boat, he saw near a gangway an army cot upon which lay the doctor, his doctor, watched over by the faithful Koyano, who might have been saying to himself, as the boat was being made fast, "As prearranged."

The men on the dock were on the point of cheering when Jim Joy stepped up on the gang plank bearing the doctor in his arms as if he were a little child, but some instinct checked them and they stood instead with bared heads until Jim laid his burden on a rude but comfortable stretcher made of deer skins. Willing hands gently raised it and bore the doctor swiftly and smoothly up

the winding path to the cabin on the hill. Behind him marched a procession of men, bearing trunks and cases, which Koyano watched with zealous care.

Poor Rodney said nothing. In fact, he was so exhausted by the long journey that he was only half conscious of what was going on and felt as if he were in a half-waking dream. But he remembered afterwards that as Jim laid him gently on his balsam couch a hot tear splashed on his face.

The next morning he was awakened by the subdued chatter of June birds and the fragrance of the woods came to him thru the open windows. For a long time he lay with closed eyes, at first simply listening and breathing, and then thinking. He had carried out his program and slipped out of the city world as quietly as if going on a summer vacation; he had fled from the wilderness of men to find a last resting place in a wilderness of trees. But was it to be a resting place? Not yet, his unquiet spirit told him.

In thinking of the woods in the city, he had thot of their quiet; he had thot of being away from men, but that was not to be. There arose in the morning air the sound of choppers' axes and the hum of the sawmill. Men shouted to each other and their teams, and he raised himself on his elbow, half expecting to see the men almost under his own window. But no, a lumber gang was at work on a slope separated by a deep ravine from his own mountain side, and the sawmill was at the foot of the hill. Some years before he had bought a considerable tract of land about his camp to protect it from the ravages of the lumbermen and for a moment he was glad, but the

bitter thot quickly followed it, "What did it matter? What did anything matter?"

As he watched the opposite slope, every now and then a great monarch of the forest would fall with a crash, "leaving a vacant place against the sky," and he thot grimly to himself: "When they fall they are sawed up into lumber that is worth something. I am simply a rotten hulk."

Koyano's quiet preparations for breakfast finally attracted his attention from his gloomy reflections. By some magic the place had already begun to have an ordered, he would not say a homelike, look. Boxes and cases had been deftly put out of the immediate foreground. Some warm-colored rugs were on the floor; a fire of white birch logs burned cheerfully in the wide, open fireplace, for even in June there is a tang of cold in the north woods. On the massive slab table a dainty white square was already set with familiar breakfast dishes and an armchair was drawn up beside it. He rubbed his eyes to be sure that he was quite awake. But Koyano's look of pleased attention as he looked thru the door of the little lean-to which was used as a kitchen, assured him that he was not dreaming and a little trickle of warmth seemed to flow thru his heart. How much thot and labor, of the kind that no money can buy, that blessed Brownie must have expended for him while he brooded and gloomed over his own miseries!

Rodney had planned to stay in bed indefinitely, perhaps always. Now that he had crawled into his hole, why not lie there like a wounded animal? But that expectant chair and waiting table appealed to a better self.

He heard Koyano at work in the kitchen and the aroma of coffee tickled his nostrils, and the sizzle of browning trout made a pleasantly familiar music. After all, why disappoint this ministering spirit, who evidently had no notion of letting him become bunk-ridden?

On a big slab chair by his bedside was a basin of cool spring water with towel and soap, and within easy reach such clothes as he could put on without help. As Rodney made his slow toilet, he glanced anxiously about to make sure that not even Koyano was watching his unaccustomed labors. Koyano was apparently engrossed in his culinary duties, but just at the right time he slipped in and helped the doctor into his clothes so deftly that it was done before he knew it, and he found himself sitting down to such a breakfast as would have stirred the jaded appetite of a dyspeptic czar. Soon after breakfast, Jim Joy came in with two big bear dogs, Bouncer and Buster. Tho the cabin was a large one, they seemed to fill it to overflowing. At first both men were a little constrained by the terrible thing about which they could not speak, but the constraint soon wore away. In response to his questions, Jim Joy told Rodney of the swift change of a hunters' camp to a lumber camp, of the cuts that had been made, and of the great log rafts which had been floated down the lake. He explained the workings of the log chute which stretched across the face of the opposite slope and down which large logs were shunted to the sawmill below. While in the midst of the gossip of the place, a whistle called Jim away to his duties as log measurer. No allusion had been made to Rodney's disaster or the cause of it. In fact, it was characteristic of the two

men that the subject was never spoken of directly by either.

Every morning before he went to his work and every evening Jim dropped in "to pass the time of day" with his doctor, and often beguiled him from his gloomy broodings by his quaint talk. Almost against his will, Rodney found himself increasingly interested in the life of the camp. He came to know the names of the men, some of whom would come in of an evening and sit on the porch of his cabin and after a gruff, "Howdy, 'Doc.'" smoke their pipes in a silence broken only occasionally by laconic comments about the weather, timber and the like.

As the days and weeks slipped by, Rodney grew weary of his self-absorbed broodings. He tried to read, but his interest was fitful. He even tried to write, but he had always depended upon his environments so far and his pen lagged and stopped.

Notwithstanding his affection for Jim and a certain interest in the life of the camp, Rodney seemed to his two solicitous watchers to be sinking into a kind of hopeless apathy. But it was Koyano, the man of craft and resources, who finally devised a plan to rouse the doctor to something of his old interest in life.

Among the boxes which Koyano had packed were a number about which Rodney had given no directions. He had showed them to Jim early one morning before the doctor was up. There was a case of shining surgeons' tools and rolls of bandages and absorbent cotton; there was a box filled with bottles and boxes of all sizes, neatly labeled; there was a shelf full of formidable books.

One morning not long after, Jim Joy bolted into the cabin crying: "Doc, tell me what to do; Mike has been chewed up in the mill and that damned camp doctor is drunk; there ain't another within thirty miles. We done the best we could, but he'll bleed to death sure if sumthin' more ain't done. Can't you tell us what to do?"

The slumbering professional instinct in the doctor was suddenly aroused and he eagerly questioned Jim as to the nature of the hurt, but he soon saw that nothing could be done by unskilled hands and sank back into his chair. "It's no use. If I could only go to him, but I'm as helpless as a babe."

Jim jumped to his feet, as if seized with a sudden inspiration. "Doc, if you will be head and hands, I will be back and legs. Will you go?" "But I have no tools and bandages—nothing," replied the doctor. "Will these do?" put in Koyano, and Rodney turned to see his old emergency case lying on the table beside him.

In less time than it takes to tell it, Jim Joy had the doctor "pig-a-back," as the boys say, and was dashing swiftly but surefootedly down the path to the camp, followed by Koyano. It was a strange sight, but no one who saw it smiled.

Jim Joy hurriedly carried the doctor to the shanty where many of the lumbermen slept, to a cot at the further end where lay a man with livid and pain-distorted face, swathed in blood-soaked bandages. It was a terrible sight, and Rodney, weak and unnerved, suddenly felt that sinking of the heart and sense of nausea which had all but unmanned him when, as a student, he had first assisted in a difficult operation. But a glance at Jim's face brot

him to his senses. Jim's back and legs had not failed him and neither his head nor his hands must fail Jim. His hands ceased trembling; the color came back to his face and to his eyes there came again the look of the cool-headed and determined fighter for life. Jim supported him from behind and Koyano supplied, as if by intuition, the needed instrument or bandage. As they worked, a group of men watched with terrible earnestness, knowing that anyone of them might have been on that blood-stained cot. It was a weird sight. In the dim light of the background the men's eyes had a half-savage look. One might have imagined them a group of primitive savages watching a human sacrifice.

To the watchers the process seemed slow. A tourniquet was applied here, a bandage there; at another place a swift motion setting a broken bone and then a simple but satisfactory splint was applied. At last it was done and the surgeon, white-lipped but steady-eyed, felt the man's pulse and turning to the other men said, "He will pull thru." Then he slipped down into Jim's arms like a tired child in the arms of his mother and fainted.

When Rodney came to full consciousness again he was lying in his own bunk in the cabin on the hill. The sounds of the morning were streaming in at the open window. At first he wondered if the experiences of the day before had not been dreams or the product of a diseased imagination, but no, on the table lay his surgical instruments which Koyano was carefully cleaning and replacing in their case. His head ached with a dull grinding pain, but as he sank back on his balsam couch for another rest something of the old miserable heart-

ache seemed to have slipped away. He dropped into a quiet sleep with a new thot and purpose filling his soul. Crippled as he was, he had saved a human life. Perhaps in this far-off place, his professional training and skill might be of some use. Surely it was better to die fighting like a man than to crawl away like a sick animal.

When Rodney awoke later in the day, he found Jim Joy sitting by his bedside. "Well, Doc, how be you? We done a good job yesterday, Mike's goin' to pull thru." The doctor's expression evidently encouraged him to go on with something that was on his mind. "The boss gave the old doctor the bounce this morning and he pulled out this afternoon. You can bet there wa'n't no band music or flowers when the old soak skipped. We boys have been kinder puttin' our heads together and we figger that a 'doc' who's got a head on him and whose hands are onto their job, tho his back and legs ain't what they was, owing to his having been ketched, is a damned sight safer man in a lumber camp than a doc whose legs and head is likely to be all on 'em queered when he is wanted most. And we have been to see the boss and he says he'll appint you camp doc if we'll tote you 'round where you're wanted. We agreed to that all right, you bet, and I says to the boys, 'All 'cepting his legs, he's the best pill mixer and sawbones west of the Atlantic Ocean and east of the Pacific, and as for legs, why, dang it, he's got mine, and they've got as much kick in them as any burro's within sight of the Rockies.' What do you say, Doc? It's your play."

For a moment Rodney could not reply, but he reached

out his hand to the big-hearted giant with a pressure that meant more than words. At last he replied: "This is very different from anything that I had planned. I don't know how much I can do or how long I can do it, but I will try it and see."

After Jim had gone, Rodney began planning for his new work with a zest which he had supposed forever gone from his life. Work! He could still work, even tho it were a little and in a far-off corner. He could go to sleep with a consciousness of having done something. He could awake to the knowledge that there was something waiting for him to do. If work be a curse, what must God's blessings be!

Rodney realized on thinking it over that good as Jim's legs were he could not entirely depend upon them, and set about planning a means of getting about better suited to his needs and the peculiar character of the country. When Jim came in the next day he said to him, "Jim, your legs are good, but I want more of them. I shall want eight at least in addition to yours." Jim looked at him with wide-eyed amazement and something of puzzled hurt and Rodney hastened to explain. "I want two sure-footed burros and I want you and the boys to rig up a kind of sling with two long poles between which the burros can go as if they were in shafts—perhaps I can drive them myself after a while and I will have the swell-est doctor's turnout in town."

Jim eagerly grasped the idea. Within a few days a pair of burros, used to the hills and rough trails, had been bought and the boys had rigged up a kind of palanquin which was light, strong and comfortable for the crippled

man. Jim broke in the strange team, which was naturally puzzled at the queer thing swung between them. Rodney laughed until he cried when he watched them. Many a time Jim was tossed out and it took the combined camp "to sort out the outfit again," as the men said with glee.

It was a proud day for Jim as he drove up to the cabin "in Doc's kerrige," his long legs almost trailing on the ground.

Soon a rough log stable was built back of the cabin and the burros introduced into their new home. After a few experiments Rodney was able to drive himself, tho Koyano always attended him and sometimes led the burros over rough places.

As summer slipped into fall Rodney's practice grew. When it was learned that there was a real city doctor at the camp, calls came from neighboring camps and from the scattered cabins of trappers and pioneer settlers. The news spread rapidly and sometimes Rodney drove his little burros twenty miles a day when visiting far-off patients.

The outdoor life bronzed his face and hands; he slept profoundly and ate with new relish, but his limbs showed no response to his new vigor. He had not expected that.

And Margaret? At first he day-dreamed about her, but he soon found that that would not do. He tried to forget her in his work, but that was impossible. Had she forgotten him? Was she happy? Would she be glad to know that he was useful—yes, beloved, as he could see in the eyes of his woodland patients? Sometimes these questions seemed to keep time to the footsteps of his burros or the beating of his heart. But no answer came

and his two watchful lovers, Jim and Koyano, were troubled by the wistful, hungry look that rarely left his face, except in some emergency of his profession.

Koyano pondered; evidently the heart of the white man was like that of the brown man. Work was not enough. One night after Rodney was asleep, he went to a small box in which he kept his most treasured belongings and took from it an envelope filled with the torn fragments of a letter. With Oriental patience he tried to piece them together like the parts of a puzzle map, but he could not do it. A happy thought came to him. He took a slip of paper and wrote on it in the round hand of a schoolboy: Esteemed and most honored lady:

I find this. I think it belonged to you, therefore I send it. His head works; his heart weeps.

Koyano.

He put the slip with the fragments of the letter into an envelope and addressed it with painstaking care to Margaret Maybourne. The next day he gave it to Jim with solemn injunctions not to lose it and to see that it was safely put in the mail bag. Jim said afterward that if he had had a hundred thousand dollars in cash in his pockets and had been on the worst street in Winnipeg at midnight he would not have felt more anxious. But the letter was duly mailed and for a time we must leave it to the tender mercies of the leather pouch.

PART III.

Fall gradually yielded to winter. The deceptive warmth of Indian summer vanished in a night. Jack Frost cracked his whip. Snow fell quietly but steadily and covered wood and clearing with blankets of white. The last boat had gone down the lake. The only means of communication with the outside world would now be snowshoes and sledges. For a month at least no word would come from the outer world. With suppressed eagerness Koyano had waited for the last mail, but no letter came. "After all, were the hearts of the white women like those of the brown, in far-off Nippon?" He was troubled as he questioned.

That winter something happened which the men of the north woods tell of even now.

During the winter months the lumber camp was a busy place. The logs which were sent down the great chute were drawn to the sawmill or to the river to be floated down by the spring freshet. After each log had fallen into the sawdust at the bottom of the chute, a gang of men with their teams dragged it out of the way and a wire signal cable gave notice at the top that the road was clear for another. Rodney never tired of watching the rush of the logs down the chute and their plunge into the great pile of buffer sawdust.

One afternoon Rodney sat in his easy chair by the window, watching the rush of the great logs down the

icy shute. This afternoon he was all alone. It was not time for Jim's afternoon visit and Koyano had gone to the village on an errand. This afternoon it was more than usually exciting. A gang of men were trying to break the record for the number of logs moved, and in order to cut short the "wait," the man who gave the signal would give it just a little before the last one had been gotten out of the way. Log followed log with dangerous rapidity. Several times it seemed to the fascinated watcher as if one had plunged into the group of eager workers. "By Jove," said Rodney to himself, "just one little slip and there's a hurry call for the doctor." The words had scarcely left his lips when the slip came. Either the signal man took too large a chance or a branch from a log pulled the signal wire. No one knows. With horror Rodney saw a great sixty-foot log rush down the shute and plunge into the group of workmen and then ricochetting on the log which had preceded it, hurl itself like a Titanic battering-ram into the sawmill, full of workers at this time of day.

A terrified shout reached him even thru the closed window. It had happened and only quick work would save some of the wounded men, but he was alone. In a frenzy of eagerness he raised himself from his chair by the strength of his arms and tried to stand, only to fall to the floor with a groan. But he did not lie there. He dragged himself to the table where his emergency case lay, and pulling it down pushed it before him as he dragged himself painfully to the door. He had some half-formed purpose of rolling and sliding down the path to the foot of the hill. It seemed to him hours before

he reached the door and pulled himself out upon the snow. There, within easy reach, as if put there by some fore-thinking Providence, was the sledge which was used in winter months to bring supplies from the village. Only the day before Jim, in response to a dare from some of the men, had slid down the hill with many a perilous twist and lurch, finally taking a "header" in a great bank of snow at the bottom.

If Rodney had taken time to calculate, he would have known that the chance for his doing successfully what the powerful lumberman with his great bodily strength and experience had found so hard and difficult, was scarcely one in a thousand, but he did not. He dragged himself painfully on the sledge and worked it to the edge of the decline, clawing the snow with his bare hands like a turtle in the sand.

At last the sled began to move of itself and Rodney grasped the steering levers which acted as back stops when the sledge was being drawn up hill. For a few rods the sled ran smoothly and slowly, then it dashed down the hill like a snowslide in the Rockies. Rodney was never able to tell the story of that mad ride. It seemed as if some other hands must have steered the wild thing on which he rode. The few who saw it said that a flurry of snow seemed to shoot down the mountain side with something dark showing now and then at the heart of it.

Loving hands and swift dug the doctor and his case out of the great drift which had swallowed them and bore him swiftly to the mill which looked like a shambles.

The man who most needed his attention was Jim, who

was bleeding to death from a great cut in the leg. Five minutes more and he would have been gone beyond recall, but the surgeon's skilful hands quickly found the severed artery and stopped the ebbing tide of life.

Tho many were desperately hurt, thanks to the doctor's skill, not a life was lost. It is true that some of the men had scars and limps and stiffnesses, but they seemed to look on them as badges of honor. They would say with pride to strangers, "Yes, I got it at the time of the big smash, when 'Doc' beat the banshee." And it did not take much encouragement to draw out the rest of the story.

Under Rodney's direction a big shack was turned into a temporary hospital and Koyano was installed as head nurse. For over two weeks the doctor stayed and did not go back to the camp on the hill.

Jim was one of the slowest to recover. For days he lay in a kind of stupor. For some time he seemed too weak to talk, but watched the doctor as he was carried from cot to cot with an expression in his deep-set eyes more eloquent than words.

One day as Rodney sat by his side, Jim spoke in a husky, far-away voice, so unlike his old ringing tone that it startled Rodney. "Doc, I did not think it would ever be me lyin' on the bunk and some other feller totin' yer around, but say, if yer hadn't come when yer did, it would have been all up with Jim Joy, and I have been thinkin' as how I wan't quite ready to go—hadn't as many credit checks as I'd orter had. The fellows has been sayin' that yer saved my life and yer did, Doc, yer did in a way, but I've been figgerin' that if it had not

been for Someone whom I hain't thot of as much as I'd orter, yer wouldn't ha' been here, and as for steerin' that sled and keepin' on top of her all the way down alone—Say, Doc, yer couldn't ha' dun it, kud yer?"

Rodney could only shake his head and say, "Jim, I guess you're on the right trail, but"—and the thot of his useless limbs and the lost Margaret checked him, "I can't follow you very far yet."

That night Koyano, as he noiselessly made his rounds, heard this strange prayer from Jim's bunk: "God, I ain't much used to speakin' to yer and it kind 'a scares me to think of yer bein' so near as to have any hand in what goes on in this camp, bein' as I ain't used to the idee. I don't want nuthin' for myself, 'ceptin' a chanct to git out some big timber for yer if yer want it—but if yer could spare time to help Doc a little, there ain't nothin' I wouldn't do for yer. I 'spect he hain't thot much of yer, same as me; but, God, he's the squarest, straightest man that ever walked on two legs—only he can't walk on his no more. Mebbe if yer was to let up on him a little, he would learn to see yer quicker—tho' yer know better than me—but it hurts more than that damned—I mean that goldarned leg of mine to see him with that look in his eyes. And, God A'mity, I don't know much about girls, but if you could kind 'a say a word to that girl in New York, and tell her that Doc is eatin' out his heart for her and that he is worth more to any woman of sense than any other man she knows, even tho' he has got as many legs as a centipede, yer'll greatly oblige,

"Yours truly,

"Jim Joy."

It was the next day—I was interested to get the date from one who knew—that Margaret received a long-delayed letter. She was at the Metropolitan Opera House again, sitting in a box with her father and a young man who was trying with indifferent success to draw her attention to himself and his small talk. She was thinking of the evening, less than a year ago, when she had sat in the same place with Rodney at her side. His face, with its lines of power, the tender look in his eyes and the lips that seemed ready to speak, were more clear to her than they had ever been since the time of their parting. Why had he left her in silence? Where had he gone? Why had he gone? Why did no one know where he was?

She was startled from her musing by her father's leaning over her and throwing a letter into her lap. "It came this afternoon, but I forgot it. What backwoodsman are you corresponding with?" She looked quickly at the queer looking letter. It was very much the worse for wear. It looked as tho it had been soaked and then dried before the fire, but the direction was still clear and with difficulty she could make out the postmark. She opened it with idle curiosity, her mind still full of Rodney.

As she did so, a torn slip of paper fell into her lap and her eyes caught three blurred words that startled her from her dream, "My dear Margaret." With trembling fingers she slipped it back into the envelope which she put into her muff and clutched with tense fingers as a drowning man grasps a life rope. Margaret could never remember how she lived thru the next hour, and how she reached the seclusion of her own room. Once there, she

bolted her door and with shaking hands emptied the pitiful scraps on her table. With beating heart she read Koyano's letter, and with eyes dimmed by tears she put together the torn pieces of her lover's letter. It was nearly morning before the last fragment was in its place, and then with great choking sobs, Margaret knelt before the table and laid her face upon as pathetic a love letter as ever woman received.

The next morning with reverent care she pasted each tiny scrap into its right place on a fresh sheet of paper and took it to her father. She buried her face in his shoulder, as she had done when a little child, while he read it. The old man did so with difficulty, every now and then stopping to wipe his glasses and breathing heavily. Then he turned and drew Margaret to him with a tenderness that no one who saw him upon the street would have dreamed him capable of. Since she had lost her mother, David Maybourne had been both father and mother to her.

That afternoon David Maybourne went to see Doctor Colrain. "Doctor, do you know where Rodney Levasseur is?" "No, I do not," replied the doctor, "and I feel more than half ashamed that I do not, but he evidently wanted to get away, even from the sympathy of his friends, and I have respected his wish."

"Do you know what is the matter with him? Believe me, it is not idle curiosity which prompts the question."

The doctor looked at him in silence for a moment and then replied grimly, as if to hide emotion which professional etiquette would not allow him to show, "Paralysis of lower back and limbs—overwork."

“Any hope?”

“No.”

Without comment the old man drew his hand to his eyes and walked heavily out of the office door. “Why did such things happen? Why had Margaret loved a man, who—was going to have such a thing happen to him?” he unreasoned with himself. “Why was Margaret, like her mother, one of those who could not forget?” He groaned aloud, oblivious of those about him, and some who heard him thought that he had lost money on the street, not knowing that the old man could have lost a million without changing face.

He went home and shut himself in his room and faced the facts, as had been his lifelong custom. It was not a question of what he wanted, but of what could be done under the circumstances. As he mused, first pity and then a more kindly feeling stole into his heart. He had been a game fighter, this young doctor, and when he lost there was no whimpering. He had done just what he himself would have done in his place. Moved by sudden impulse, he rose and stood before the picture of Margaret’s mother and looked at it with pathetic questioning. “What would she have done?”

Some answer seemed to come to his questioning, for he turned and went with his usual decision of manner to his desk and wrote the following letter.

My dear Rodney:

It was only yesterday that Margaret and I learned why you had left us so suddenly and where you had gone. I cannot express my sympathy for your misfortune, but I can express my appreciation of the motive which led you to slip away as you did. It was manly and like you, but, my dear Rodney, it

was too late to run away. Margaret and I would rather share your trouble here, where perhaps we could make it less, than in Canada where we cannot, and where distance and uncertainty add to our anxiety. Come back. If you are willing I will come for you.

Faithfully yours,

DAVID MAYBOURNE.

Then he called Margaret and drawing her down beside him showed her the letter which he had written. For a moment she forgot her lover to wonder at the self-denying love of her father. Only she could know how much self-denial that letter meant. She turned to speak to him, but his eyes had that far-off look which even as a child she had learned to interpret. Kissing his gray hair reverently she took a pen and added one word of post-script, "Come!"

PART IV.

In the early spring Rodney sat in the door of his cabin and watched the coming of the mail boat. During the year of his exile it had never brot him anything but supplies and business letters. Still he could never see it come without a quickening of the pulse, and after the mail had been distributed and no personal message came to him, an unreasonable depression of spirits would seize him.

Perhaps it was the spring songs which moved him; perhaps it was the long waiting, but this time as the boat drew near he could feel the pounding and throbbing of his heart. He tried to control it by directing his thot to other things, but it was a useless attempt. He found himself listening almost breathlessly for Koyano's footsteps. "What made him so late?" He glanced angrily at

his watch only to find that Koyano could not have returned by this time by any possible hurrying, and "why should he hurry?"

But at last Koyano came and laid two businesslike letters on the table with manifest indifference. Rodney, with a sense of disappointment which angered him, turned and ripped open the first letter and after a glance tossed it into the waste basket. In the same way he opened the second letter but Koyano noticed a sudden change in his doctor's face; he turned white and tense and the hand which grasped the open letter trembled. Rodney read the letter thru again and again, seeming unable to grasp its meaning, but at last it came to him. His first conscious thought was of the father. "I did not suppose that a man could do it; it does not seem credible." Then his heart leaped to the appeal of that short but eloquent postscript and the blood surged back into his face. It seemed as if his soul would rend his body in its struggle to answer Margaret's call.

Poor Koyano! Women are not the only ones who have to wait in silence and uncertainty. The charm was working, but how?

I could not, if I would, describe Rodney's struggles that night. If he could only see Margaret; if he could hear her voice and feel the touch of her fingers; if—and all that was lost in a riot of feeling. But from the beginning, in the background of his consciousness, waiting for the tumult to subside, stood his better and stronger self and he could give but one decision.

The next morning Rodney wrote so that the letter could be carried by the returning boat.

My dear Mr. Maybourne:

I do not know how you found my retreat. I thot I had covered my tracks, but I am glad that I did not succeed. If I had, I should never have known to what unselfish heights love could carry a father. If God is a Father and a father can do a thing like this, I shall have to think more of Him than I have.

But I cannot come. In New York I would simply be a helpless cripple, ignored by most, cared for tenderly by a few, but useless. Here I can do what no one else can do, or at least is willing to do. And I know it is a poor thot, but I cannot help it. Here I am not hurt by pity. The men are used to me.

And—you know what I once longed for. Knowing Margaret, you know that my feeling for her could not change. But being a man and the man you are, God bless you, you know that I could not come unless it was to her heart and home, and how could I, half man that I am, do that? I would not even be that if I let her sacrifice herself to pity.

No, I cannot, must not, will not, come.

I must stay with my few sheep in the wilderness. But believe me, when this pain has passed, I shall be happier than I ever thot to be. And Margaret, tell her to forget—no, not that—tell her to think of me as one who has passed on and cannot return, but awaits—but no, you must not tell her that, for she must be as free as God's air and sunshine.

Gratefully yours,

RODNEY LEVASSEUR.

After that, Jim noticed a change in the doctor. The look of restlessness and bitterness had gone and a look not often seen upon a man's face, tho more often on a woman's, had taken its place—that of one who has passed thru great tribulation and found the other shore. I think it was this that the seer John had in mind when he said, "He hath put His mark in their foreheads." God had put His mark upon him, and while he knew it not, even the rough men of the lumber camp saw it and wondered.

Rodney had found, as Carlyle saw, but did not experience, "That a man may miss of happiness and gain instead thereof blessedness."

Up to this time, Rodney had been satisfied to dress wounds and prescribe for disease of the body, but his eyes now began to see that these men had deeper hurts than any given by saw or axe or falling timber, and that the sickness of a soul is infinitely worse than the sickness of the body. As he went about his rounds he became a ministering spirit, tho he knew it not. Now it was a broken prayer at the bedside of the dying, now a verse of Scripture at some humble grave to which no minister could come, and then it was a grasp of the hand that had moral lift in it for some poor fellow who had fallen. And the boys of the camp, who had generally run wild when not at work found that the doctor knew no end of wonderful things, that he could tell stories that were more fun than hanging about the groggery, and which made one feel, as one of the boys said, "As if it might be jolly good fun to be somebody."

Thru these weeks of self-forgetful service, God came to him in thot of Margaret.

That winter Jim and the doctor put their heads together. Drink is the curse of the frontier camp as well as of the city. Many camps are too remote for the gospel to reach them, but not for gin. And the men having nothing to do of an evening visit the saloon which furnishes them with the liquor which men without purpose crave. In this camp the saloon was a wing of the store and postoffice, and every night, winter and summer, it was the rounding up place for most of the men.

It was Jim's idea to begin with, but Rodney worked out the details. "Doc," said Jim, musingly, "Doc, I wish there was some place in this camp where the boys could git together of an evenin' besides that danged rum hole. They ain't natchally bad, most uv 'em, but the liccer plays hell with 'em."

That set Rodney to thinking. He had been hoping for some time to get the lumber boss to put up a big shack which could be used as an emergency hospital. Why not make the plan and the building larger? He went to the boss and much to that man's surprise, persuaded him to put up a building with four rooms, one for a hospital, one for a reading and game room and two small rooms for Koyano and himself, for he knew that he must stand by this new venture if it was to succeed.

After the building was done he left the cabin on the hill, half regretfully and half gladly, and took up his work in what the men came to know as "Doc's place," tho it might just as properly have been called Jim's, for it never would have gone without him. Later the letters Y. M. C. A. were placed over the door, but to the men it was still "Doc's."

As soon as Rodney had moved in, Jim came to him and said: "Now as to startin' this log down the shute, my idee is this. Mebbe I understand the ways of the boys a little better than you do, bein', as it were, one of 'em; my idee is that we don't want no free lunch business here. If the boys think it is their show, it will go a hummin', but if they think it's set up, you can't move it with the best team of mules in this camp. Yer get the boss to give the room for a small rent and I'll start a

club. A pool club will do as well as any other—and the readin' and sich like things can drift in kinder natchal like."

Jim was a genius. The boys "caught on" with enthusiasm and chipped in enough to buy a couple of old pool tables. Little by little other games were added. Newspapers and magazines made their appearance. One by one the old retainers of the saloon dropped in, at first occasionally, and then regularly. Rodney could never tell just how it was done, except that it was "Jim's work." The same qualities which had made him the ruling spirit of the grocery and grog shop made him the leader now. Wherever he was, there was good company. The men seemed to enjoy nothing better than sitting before the great open fireplace, smoking their pipes, and listening to or sharing in the conversation which Jim controlled without conscious effort. Almost every mail brought something to add to the attractions of Doc's place. At one time it was a box of books, at another a phonograph, and so on.

Rodney vaguely wondered where they all came from and how the men could afford them, but his mind was so absorbed with fitting up his little hospital that he was not so observing as he otherwise would have been. When he asked Jim any questions, they were always met in a way that satisfied him at the time without leaving a clear impression on his mind.

One more observant would have noticed that Jim and Koyano had a secret, which tickled Jim so much that "he felt like to bust."

The secret began two weeks after Rodney's letter to

David Maybourne, when this letter came to Koyano, written in a dainty woman's hand, but which Koyano could read only with Jim's help.

My dear Mr. Koyano:

Thank you for sending me the letter. It was mine and I owe you more than I can tell for sending it. I hope it will make a great difference in all our lives some time, and when it does we will remember what we owe to your love and fidelity.

In the meanwhile, I want you to do something for me, but I don't want anyone to know about it. Will you send me a letter by every mail and tell me whether the doctor is well and what he is doing—and if he looks happy and if he needs anything?

And sometime—you must not even look as if you knew—I will come and see you.

Affectionately your friend,

MARGARET MAYBOURNE.

P. S. If he should be sick, you *must let me know at once*.

Every mail after that carried a quaintly worded bulletin from Koyano, which, tho short, was so long in meaning to Margaret that she soon got a very clear idea of the life her lover was living. At first her heart was torn by the thot of his weakness in the wilderness, then it swelled with pride in his courage and in the work which he was doing with such quiet bravery.

By the end of the winter the hospital had been equipped to suit Rodney's desire. Jim had made out of "Doc's place" an attractive social center. It was slowly but surely putting the saloon out of business, and the boss admitted that he could have afforded to pay all the bills himself, the men were so much more efficient. Rodney was busy with his work which he loved; he was honored

and believed in, and all thru the fall and winter had been absorbed by his new plans and upheld by a new sense of the Fatherhood of God. But spring brot a change. The sense of exaltation passed and the exhilaration of his work ceased. Following Jim's suggestion, he went back to his cabin on the hill.

Rodney still went about his duties as usual in his strange burro-carriage, but when his work was over he would sit for hours on the porch and look wistfully down the river with eyes that seemed to look farther still.

One night as Koyano stepped up behind him, bringing a book for which the doctor had asked, but about which he had forgotten, he heard him murmuring, "Margaret, Margaret! O God, I need Margaret!"

Without giving him the book, Koyano stole away and the next mail carried a brief but eloquent note to Margaret.

It was not quite a month later, near the last of June, that Rodney happened to reach the village returning from one of his trips, about the time that the boat was due. He had never been there at its arrival since he himself had come, dreading this link with the outside world with a feeling natural, but more or less morbid as he knew. Today he decided to stay and watch the boat come in, "As a bit of moral discipline," he told himself.

Everyone was familiar with the strange equipage, but they wondered a little to see it there. Every man, woman and child had a word for the doctor, but he did not notice it. No one, however, resented his silent ab-

straction. "I reckon it makes him kind uv homesick," was the only comment.

A couple of children, more daring than the rest, scrambled on the backs of the patient burros to get a better view. Tho they jostled Rodney as they did so, he did not notice them. His eyes were fixed steadily but apparently unseeingly upon the approaching boat.

With its usual wheezy deliberation, it came up to the dock, was made fast, and the gang plank drawn out. So far, all was as usual, but the group of watchers suddenly sensed something new. The freight rustlers instead of rushing noisily up the plank, hung back, and a young woman followed by two middle-aged gentlemen mounted to the dock.

Rodney watched them in a kind of stupor as they passed thru the group of watchers and came towards him, but when they were within a few feet of him, a "light that never was on sea or land" suddenly illumined his face with heaven's own glory. Those who were near him heard him speak only two words, "Margaret, Margaret," in tones that brot tears to the eyes of the rough woodsmen, and then, galvanized into new life by the most subtle and most potent energy in the world, the doctor slipped down from his sling seat and stood trembling before her.

It was Doctor Colrain's cheery voice which broke the tension, too great to be borne for very long. "Rodney, my boy, the miracle has been wrought by this dear wonder worker, to the confusion of our medical science, but go it slow. Here, boys, help the doctor into his chariot!"

As for David Maybourne, he cleared his throat, and

blew his nose as if it had been midwinter, not noticing that Rodney did not speak to him till they were well on their way up the hill.

Margaret insisted upon walking beside Rodney all the way, saying little, but gently petting the burros as she walked beside them, in a way that spoke volumes. Had they not carried him?

When they reached the cabin, Koyano was there to greet them, with such a glow in his face as did honor to the Sunrise Kingdom. He looked keenly at Margaret and was content. Even a maiden of the Samurai could not have done better.

The delicate aroma of rare Japanese tea filled the air, and the table was set on the porch at the spot overlooking the river, but Rodney at least never looked that way.

Just as they were about to sit down, Rodney said, with a tremble in his voice, "This will not be complete without Jim Joy."

As if answering to his wish, Jim entered, and it was Jim and Margaret who helped Rodney to his seat. Then it was Jim who took the laboring oar in the conversation and left the others, less embarrassed, to their thots.

Doctor Colrain and David Maybourne soon slipped away to look about them and talk of lumber and railroads, and other things about which they were not thinking. Koyano busied himself ostentatiously in his kitchen. Jim rose to go, and as he stood before them said reverently, "God's a heap better than we thot, ain't He?"

Just as the sun was setting and its glory was on them both, Rodney turned to Margaret with a sudden look of trouble in his face: "Margaret, forgive me, but I cannot

go back, even with you. They need me here." And the shadow of a great fear quenched the light in his face. But Margaret leaned towards him with a look in her face that he had never seen before and said: "Rodney, I do not ask you to leave your work, your noble work, I only want you to let me share it with you," and then with an archness, sweet to him as the breath of the balsam, "You know that when the mountain would not come to Mohammed, Mohammed had to go to the mountain, so I have come to you, my blessed mountain."

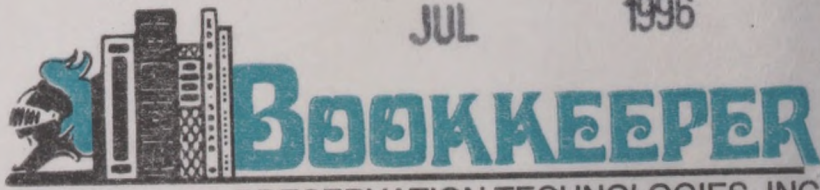
The summer twilight yielded to the glory of a star-decked and moon-illumined night, and the two were alone, in the mountain, before God.

(FINIS)

APR 9 1912

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing Agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date:

JUL 1996



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